



E 440

.5
.R91

Copy 1

E 440
.5
.R91
Copy 2

The Educational Powers of our present National Troubles.

A

S E R M O N

BY THE REV. WM. RUDDER, D. D.

The Educational Powers of our present National Troubles.

A

S E R M O N

PREACHED IN

St. Paul's Church, Albany,

ON

SUNDAY EVENING, JAN. 13, 1861.

BY THE REV. WM. RUDDER, D. D.

ALBANY:

MUNSELL & ROWLAND, 78 STATE STREET.

1861.

E 440

5

1811

192



CORRESPONDENCE.

ALBANY, JAN. 18, 1861.

To the Rev. WILLIAM RUDDER, D. D. :

Dear Sir—The undersigned having heard your Sermon delivered in St. Paul's Church, on Sunday evening, the 13th inst., on "The Educational Powers of our present National Troubles," and approving of the sentiments it contains, respectfully solicit of you a copy for publication.

Yours respectfully,

MAJOR J. T. SPRAGUE, U. S. Army,	BARENT P. STAATS, EDWIN W. CORNING,
E. EVERTSEN,	WM. N. FASSETT,
JAMES GOOLD,	S. W. WHITNEY,
JOHN SILL,	MASON F. COGSWELL,
MAURICE E. VIELE,	J. H. VAN ANTWERP,
J. OWEN MOORE,	JOHN TAYLOR,
GRATZ VAN RENSSELAER,	E. E. KENDRICK,
W. C. PORTER,	T. W. P. KENDRICK,
T. SQUIRES,	WM. WARD,
W. LACY,	WM. P. FELTMAN,
ROBT. G. CRUTTENDEN,	E. H. BENDER,
IRA PORTER,	S. MOFFAT,
C. W. BENDER,	M. W. BENDER.

ALBANY, JAN. 24, 1861.

To Major J. T. SPRAGUE, BARENT P. STAATS, M. D., MASON F. COGSWELL, M. D., MESSRS. JOHN SILL, WM. N. FASSETT, MAURICE E. VIELE, JOHN TAYLOR, J. H. VAN ANTWERP, and others :

Gentlemen—Your letter of the 18th inst., requesting, for publication, a copy of my late Sermon on the National Troubles, has been received. The Sermon will, I fear, be found to carry sufficient evidence in itself, that it was written without the remotest idea of its being presented, in a printed form, to the Public. Still, I am profoundly convinced of the truth, and great importance, of the doctrines therein enunciated; and since you think the publication of them, at this time, may possibly be of benefit, I willingly commit the manuscript to your hands. If a single person may be aroused thereby to a more thorough appreciation of his high privileges, and solemn responsibilities, as a Citizen of this great Republic, neither my work in writing, nor yours in publishing, will have been in vain.

Yours respectfully,

WM. RUDDER.

S E R M O N .

“When thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.”—ISAIAH, XXVI, 9.

The fact here asserted is one of fitness or possibility, not of absolute or unvarying certainty. It is not meant that when God's judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world *do*, or always *will*, learn righteousness; but simply that they *may* do so, and further that they *ought* to do so.

Two important Truths, however, underlie the mere primary teaching of this text, which give force to it, and indeed are its constituent elements. The first of these is, that God does not punish simply for the sake of punishing, but in order that the individual or the nation, so visited, may thereby be brought to clearer perceptions of Truth, and higher attainments in righteousness; and the second is, that it is the part both of wisdom and duty, when men or nations are punished, that they enquire, what are the meaning and purpose

of the Divine judgments? — what sins they are intended to correct? what duties they are designed to enforce? — “When thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.”

I propose, in the spirit of this text, to speak to you, this evening, concerning what perhaps I can not better denominate than as *The Educational Powers of our present National Troubles*.

There is, I am aware, an opinion or a prejudice abroad in the community, which opposes itself against any reference whatever, in the Pulpit, to matters which are conceived of as belonging exclusively to the domain of Politics, or of the political world. And yet I do not feel it at all necessary for me to make any apology for that line of remark which it is my intention to pursue on the present occasion. It may be well however to observe, in passing, that if the opinion or feeling referred to, be not, after all, nothing more than a mere prejudice, — a thing, that is, determined outside the forum of Reason, by Passion, or Impulse, or Interest; if it be a rational conviction; if it be a conclusion based on reasonable grounds; then it must, like all other such convictions, when viewed as deter-

minative of action, feel and admit the limiting or conditioning effect of varying Times and Circumstances. We all know that what, in this view, may be just and wise under one set of circumstances, may be eminently unjust and unwise under another set of circumstances; that what may be judicious and safe at one time, may be injudicious and even perilous at another. Whatever therefore may be the general truth or justice of this opinion, if opinion it be, it is yet certain that there may be, and indeed must be, conditions under which it cannot be made, with any propriety, to apply. Now for myself, I am free to admit,—and my practice in this place will abundantly establish the sincerity of my opinion,—that, at no time, and under no circumstances, have Politics, *properly so-called*, any right to a place among the topics of pulpit discussion; and what I mean by Politics properly so-called, is—Politics in the common sense of the mere contests of Parties for Power, or even in the higher and truer sense of the Science of Government with its questions of material interests, and its considerations of secular affairs. I have no sympathy with that class of men who perhaps may rightly be called *Political Preachers*—men, that

is, who seem at least to prefer Politics to the Gospel, and who really reduce the Pulpit into the mere Engine of a Party. The Office of the Preacher, as a moral instructor, is unquestionably to explain and enforce the great Principles of the Divine Law; and certainly if the Preacher himself be fully imbued with a sense of the grandeur, and comprehensiveness, and importance—the height, and depth, and length, and breadth—of these principles; and further of the deep and pressing necessity, on the part of mankind, for their thorough illustration, and constant enforcement; he will have but little time, as he will feel but little inclination, to go beyond this proper business of his office for the discussion of any other subjects whatsoever. But while I admit all this, and maintain all this, I am unwilling to allow the doctrine to be publicly, constantly, and dogmatically asserted,—and to remain unquestioned, as if it were axiomatic and unquestionable,—that when any People, in their public lives and acts, may be violating, either blindly or willfully, those very Principles of Truth and Justice which the Pulpit is divinely established to proclaim and defend, that then the Minister of Christ has no *right* to speak; that

his duty and responsibility ceases in the matter; because forsooth the People are not now acting and sinning as individuals, but in their corporate, or political, or national capacity. I cannot admit this doctrine. And I cannot admit it for several reasons; — because I believe that the general prevalence of this idea in any community would be attended, as I fear it has been already in our own, with the most disastrous and wide-spread political demoralization; because it would be tantamount to an admission that men may do in masses what they cannot do as individuals, — that God's Law touches each man separately and individually, but that a million of men, acting in any political capacity, may break God's Sceptre and cast it contemptuously from their midst; because it is, in fact, to make God's Empire, by so much, less than universal; because it is really in direct antagonism with, and tends, of necessity, to obscure before the popular mind, the fundamental truth of the Divine Origin of the State; and, finally, because it pours contempt upon the whole history and teaching of God's own Word, and faults, besides, the past practice of the Christian Pulpit in every age and country — in every great crisis and advancement of the human race. I

cannot admit this Doctrine. I solemnly protest against it.

But, as I have said, it is not necessary for me to offer these remarks — thus, as it were, to make guard and apology beforehand — on account of any words which it is my intention shall fall from my lips to-night. I make them now because I shall have to consider the *moral effect* of the opinion or feeling referred to, in a subsequent part of the present Discourse. It is certain however that if ever there be a time when the Pulpit may speak, or ought to speak, in reference to political matters, that time is upon us now. And it is perhaps a Sign of Hope for the Future, that very many are to-day earnestly beseeching the Pulpit to do what, but a short time since, they were most strenuous, and even violent, in asserting that the Pulpit had no right to do. But my purpose on the present occasion is, as I have said, to enquire simply, and in the spirit of the text, concerning what I have called — *The Educational Powers of our present National Troubles*; to enquire, in other words, whether these Troubles be not calculated to remind us of certain Truths which, as a Nation, we may have forgotten; and to enforce upon us certain Duties which, as a Nation, we may have

neglected. The cloud indeed rests darkly and heavily over the land; but it may be after all, that if the present impending calamities shall only lead us to dispose our hearts aright towards God, there may even yet be found for us, both as individuals and as a People, a "bright light within the cloud."

Let us however pause for a single moment before going further, and observe the condition of things around us. What a transition has there been from the state of affairs which existed but ten weeks ago! How rapidly have we traveled during the last two months that are gone! Verily, the shadow upon the dial has sprung forward through many degrees in a single movement; and what, in former generations, would have filled whole eras and volumes of History, we have, with the tremendous condensing power of our age, compressed into the few pages which would then have been but the chronicle of days. Go back with me a few steps into the past, and compare the "then" and the "now." But two months ago, and the whole country, throughout its entire extent, was flushed with health and strength; and the people of these United States, not only stood in the midst of a wondrous present

prosperity, but lifted up their eyes, with confident gaze, along the sunny slopes of an even more wondrous prosperity to come. On every side were the abounding elements of Life, and Wealth, and Power. Every department of business was filled with the hum and stir of energetic and productive industry. Millions of strong arms were busy coining a nation's wealth, amid healthful and happy labor. And then, when a green and fruitful Summer had been changed by the wondrous alchemy of Nature, into rich and golden Autumn, the earth poured forth its treasures in such marvellous abundance as probably, since time began, it never had poured them forth before. Never, in one word, did a Nation seem more eminently blessed. Health, and Wealth, and Prosperity were at home; Power, and Honor, and fair Reputation were abroad. And *now!* Who does not feel and know that to-day we are hanging on the brink of a thousand perils, dark and unfathomable indeed? Who does not see that the hearts of wise men, and brave men, are failing them for fear? Look around you once again. The wheels of Trade, just now so busily revolving, have halted and are still. The tides of business have ceased their Pactolian flow. The

advance of the Nation is suddenly checked in the very midst of its prosperous career. A crumbling rottenness seems to have entered into its very bones. Sunshine has given place to storm; and Hope has well-nigh yielded to despair. What, alas, has become of the great, and strong, and proud Republic of yesterday,—the very mention of which justly caused every American heart to thrill with an honest and an honorable pride?—*is it gone?* Is the Government founded by the Wisdom, cemented with the Blood, hallowed by the Prayers of a great and noble Ancestry, to be hurled into ruins? or is it, even in this hour, at an end? Are civil war, and anarchy, and ruin—political, commercial, social ruin—to be our inevitable lot? What has brought us to this condition? What are the causes of decay and death that have been so secretly, but so terribly, at work?—These are serious Questions; and it behooves us, as wise men, and good men, to endeavor to answer them.

Now, my Brethren, it is in view of this melancholy and disastrous state of affairs, and in the presence of such questions as these,—questions which are pressing themselves painfully upon the saddened minds and hearts of all honest and

patriotic men — that we ask your attention to the important enquiry which we have ventured to propose. We do not seek to determine, you will observe, what are the *immediate* causes of present events. Each man will undoubtedly determine these differently, according to his own position, and his peculiar angle of vision. And such an inquiry might possibly lead us into just that style of Political discussion which we do *not* think suitable for the Pulpit. But we wish to go down into the great underlying and distinctive moral characteristics of our life hitherto as a People — of our Political life; and see if there be not among *these*, causes — working through whatever intermediate links of cause and effect — entirely calculated and sufficient to produce just these disastrous results which all men are now willing to deplore. It is only indeed through such inquiry and consideration, drawing their educational powers out of them, that our present Troubles can at all profit us, and enable us to “learn righteousness.” Crimination and Recrimination bring neither Wisdom nor Safety. On the contrary, they strike at Charity which is the foundation of both. Let us rather, each and all, examine ourselves. Let us

consider our motives and conduct in the past. Perhaps it may be discovered that the real secret and root of the National Troubles are to be found in these.

Looking then at the disastrous events of the last few weeks, we ask, — To the recognition of what Truths does the honest consideration of them necessarily force us? What effect do they produce upon the conscientious observer? — It is by determining these points that we shall discover what we believe to be their *Educational Powers*. By understanding what they are *calculated* to teach, we may best learn what they were *designed* to teach.

And first of all, as preparatory to all else, it is worthy of notice — *that they have made us think*.

Probably of all people the Americans are just those least open to the charge of dullness or sluggishness of intellect. It would seem that the very conditions of the national life and development have almost necessitated a peculiar mental activity which distinguishes them among the nations of the earth. We do not say, you will observe, that they are the most *thoughtful* people — a people, that is, given peculiarly to calm, and patient, and serious thought in regard

to any matter;—the lack of this may even perhaps be numbered among our national defects; but certainly they are distinguished by an activity of mind which pauses not on the threshold of any subject, but penetrates restlessly and inquisitively into every department of human inquiry. And yet, strange to say, in that very department in which above all others, as one would suppose, owing to the peculiar character of the Government under which they live, their minds would be especially occupied, the American people, as a general thing, do not *think*—think, that is, carefully and conscientiously, by, and for, themselves. Their minds are totally absorbed in other directions—mostly perhaps in the occupations of business, and the pursuit of wealth; and they leave their line of conduct as *Citizens*, which in them at least ought to be matter of *solemn and religious Duty*, to be determined for them, either by chance, or by the Newspaper which they happen to read, or by the dicta of the Party to which they belong, or by the political Demagogue who uses them for his own good ends. Completely possessed by the greed of gain, they are blinded to the fact, that the safety of property itself is directly dependent upon the wise and

righteous regulation of the state; and as completely eaten up with the love of self, they allow the very principles of all high and generous Patriotism to be weakened, if not utterly destroyed, in their breasts.

Now one of the first effects and lessons of the troubles which have been visited upon us,— unless indeed God has been, or is, speaking to us, through His providence, in vain,— is, that, as we have said, they have made this People *think*, and have thereby, it is to be hoped, made them perceive *the imperative necessity that they should go on thinking*. The great masses of the Nation have, we believe, done more honest, and serious, and conscientious political thinking within the last sixty days than in as many years before. And this is the first step always toward the discovery of Truth, and consequently towards fundamental, and therefore abiding, agreement. We have the Divine authority in regard to Israel of old, that the secret cause of their sin and ruin was, that they did not *consider*;— “My people doth not consider.” In our case also, consideration— honest, serious thought— is the first step necessary to the perception of responsibility and duty. And therefore in so far as we have been,

or shall yet be, made to think; in so far as we have thus been brought to see the disastrous consequences of our past neglect in this matter; in so far as we have been led to the perception of our own errors, and the recognition of our duties as Christian citizens; so far will the present national sorrows and dangers not have come upon us in vain.

I am fully persuaded that this is one of the effects which the present judgments of God are intended to produce. The command and the exhortation is now, as always, "Hear ye the voice of the Rod, and who hath appointed it." And in order to this, the mental ear must listen; we must consider; we must think: for God is speaking, and unless we do so, He will speak to us in vain.

But, further, the present troubles are calculated to prove, and illustrate, the fact, that it holds true as well of nations as of individuals, — that "*man doth not live by bread only.*"

We have already called your attention to the remarkable abundance and prosperity, both in possession and in prospect, which, but a short time ago, seemed to be so liberally vouchsafed to every section of the land. The earth groaned

beneath the burden of its fruits. Almost countless riches seemed ready to pour themselves into the coffers of the people. And the Nation appeared to have attained to a stability, and a position of wealth, and dignity, and power, which commanded and received the respect and admiration of the world. And yet, as we have said, it has, with a suddenness that is more than startling, become a question with thoughtful men whether the Nation and Government of "then" is in existence any longer. The apparent certainty of Wealth has yielded to the dark possibilities of Want; the song of Peace is hushed in the fearful expectancy of War; the sunshine has faded into night, and scarcely one star of Hope can now be detected glimmering through the gloom. It is evident to all men that, whatever may be the ultimate result, the approaching condition of the country *may* at least be one of wide-spread ruin. *Bread* alone, it is clear, *Material Prosperity*, has not sufficed for the national life. There are, it appears, certain moral Laws at work determining the elevation or depression of nations, their permanence or their overthrow, entirely independent of, and superior to, those whose results may be measured on the scale

of simple Profit and Loss. This then is another of the Truths that this transition, so sudden and so startling, is eminently calculated to teach.

And certainly, my Brethren, no people stand more in need of having this Truth impressed upon them, than do our own. Blessed with a Prosperity and Power, almost unsurpassed in its actual extent, and certainly unparalleled in the rapidity with which it has been reached, we have come to regard the possession of material wealth as the first and only thing needful for the well-being of a nation, and to look upon ourselves moreover as the sole authors of our own good fortunes. Accordingly, among the defects or vices of the national character, none are more marked than an inordinate arrogance, and an almost infidel reliance upon ourselves. "My power," both as a Nation and as individuals, we say, "my power, and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth." The idea of God as the necessary sustainer and preserver of Nations, has been well-nigh blotted from our minds; and we have become, as a consequence, both regardless of His Will, and practically indifferent to His favor.

It will be scarcely necessary for us to show, at

any length, how this general temper works itself out into the details of the national character and life. He must have been a careless observer indeed, who has failed to notice it in its numberless manifestations. Feeling our *Might*, we have become regardless of *Right*. Knowing ourselves *Lawmakers*, we have become impatient of *Law*. Priding ourselves upon our *Privileges*, we have become forgetful of the existence of our *Duties*. And so, as we have said, we have grown up into a temper arrogant, and intractable, and overbearing, which distinguishes us alike in our public and our private acts, and both at home and abroad. Go wherever you will over the wide world's surface, and there probably you will find the American; but wherever you find him, there, as a general thing, you will discover that he manifests a character, which is certainly regarded as peculiarly belonging to his people, marked by the most boastful self-assertion, and by an utter defiance of all Authority. He is an American — he feels and says; the power of a great Government is behind him; *he is that Government and that Power*; and therefore he is free to trample under foot all barriers, of whatever sort, which may oppose themselves to his Will, — free, in one

word, to do, everywhere and always, just as he pleases.

Now God, as it seems to us, is endeavoring, through the present troubles, to press home upon our minds and hearts this Truth which has been so generally forgotten, — that material resources alone can afford no surety of the permanence of a nation's strength and prosperity, but that only "blessed is that nation whose God is the Lord;" and, further, is endeavoring to rebuke and correct that spirit of Lawlessness and irreverence which, basing itself upon such grounds, has become so fearfully prevalent in the land. Certainly, never was this truth more clearly demonstrated in the experience of any people. It has even reached to this — whether that great Power which, almost yesterday, we boasted of as these "*United States*," exists any longer. Surely then it behooves us to learn God's lesson, and lay it to our hearts. Let us, in sincere penitence for our sins, confess them at His feet; and let us beseech Him, in mercy, even now, to deliver us from shame.

But there is a *third* Lesson which the present national troubles are calculated to teach — and that is one touching what we may call, *The moral*

bligations peculiarly inherent in American Citizenship.

There are three Divine Institutions established in the world — *the Family, the Church, and the State.* We do not mean, of course, to say that the State, in the sense of the mere *Form* of Government in which the essential principle of the State clothes itself is of divine origin and appointment; but that the essential principle of Authority itself, which underlies, and gives its sanction to, every Form of Government, comes forth from God, and is endowed with divine prerogatives. “*There is no power but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God.*” “*Rulers are God’s ministers.*”

But now, if this be so, then it follows, that just in proportion as any People are admitted to a larger share, not only in moulding and determining the Form of Government in the State, but also in giving character to its acts, so does there rest upon them, in the exercise of this privilege, a greater moral responsibility. It surely must involve a high degree of guilt, when such a People, either through thoughtlessness or indifference, allow a Divine Institution, the active manifestation and exercise of whose Authority they

are permitted to determine, to become perverted from those high ends for which it was evidently designed, and made both an instrument and an example of violence and wrong. In so doing, they clearly dishonor God; for they make what He has appointed and sanctioned to be practically an unholy thing. We maintain therefore this proposition — that the Tyrant who perverts the authority divinely intrusted to him for good, to purposes of cruelty and injustice, is certainly no more a criminal, than the American Citizen, who, either through neglect to perform conscientiously his duty as such, or through exercising his privileges unfaithfully, helps, directly or indirectly, to the support of political corruption and crime. There is a moral responsibility in this matter; and we cannot neglect it with impunity.

And yet it is to be feared that no small portion of our People, and that too among those who ought to be the strength and reliance of the Nation, have been habitually forgetful of this fact, and often perhaps knowingly indifferent to it. With some, as we have said, an insatiable love of money has made them unwilling to devote the necessary time and thought to the welfare of their country, or else has so demented them that

they are really unable to judge what is wisest and best; while with others, the hope of an indirect personal advantage, either tending in the same direction, or contributing to the attainment of political influence or place, has made them willing to subscribe to measures, and even to fawn upon men, both of which, the commonest instincts of manhood, to say nothing of a high and generous Patriotism, should have caused them to spurn from them in utter indignation and contempt. And what is the result? Is it not true that the whole government of the country has become, too generally, corrupt? Is it not true that our great centres of government are notoriously centres of political crime? Is it not true that the best and wisest are too generally thrust out from all share in the councils of the State? Is it not true that Justice and Right are bought and sold in our land? Is it not true that the Legislation for the country is done outside of its Legislative Halls? Is it not true that *Politics*, the sacred Science of government, has become the mere Gambler's Science for purposes of personal advancement or gain? Is it not true, in this very hour, that the whole country, North, and South, and East, and West, is

being killed — is having its very life sucked out of it — by the self-seeking and unscrupulous Demagogues who, like vampires, have fastened upon it, and who have been permitted, by our own negligence or culpable connivance with crime, to rise into places of trust and power? Are not these things notoriously true? Who will have hardihood enough to deny them? And yet we wonder at the advent of Political disaster! Is it not rather matter of infinite wonder, that, there being a God of Truth and Justice in Heaven, disaster has not come upon us before!

And in what is the prolific source of all these evils to be found other than, as we have said, in the criminal failure, so common on the part of the Citizens of the Republic, to recognize their responsibilities, and to fulfil their duties, as such, fearlessly and conscientiously as in the sight of God? There can be no question that we are greatly guilty in this matter; and God, — we trust only for purposes of warning, — is showing to us, in the prospect of national ruin and humiliation, the inevitable consequences of our sins. Let us not then close our ears to this Truth. Let us not pass it by as a mere general thing in

which we are not individually and particularly concerned. The purification of the State must begin in the purification of the consciences of the individuals composing the State. Here, therefore, must begin the cure of our evils. It is true now, as it has been, and will be always, that it is only "if Christ shall make us free, that we shall be free indeed."

But a *fourth* lesson may be derived from the present troubles, viz; — the peril of separating in the popular mind, *Religion* and *Politics*.

In the opening of this discourse, I insisted, as you will remember, upon the *Right*, and, under certain circumstances, the *Duty* of the Pulpit to enforce the great principles of the divine Law, as in every department of man's life and activity, so in that of his political conduct. And I did so on the general ground, that there is, and can be, no matter in which a human being is called upon to decide and act as a moral agent, where the authority of that Law is not perfect and supreme. No man, or body of men, has a right to say to that Law — "So far, and no farther." To do so, is by so much to endeavor to dethrone God. And I deem it important, and indeed vital to the very existence of Society, that this *Right, on these grounds,*

be maintained (however seldom it may be found judicious to exercise it), because I believe, that just so soon as the minds of any People become once leavened with this idea — that the Law of God has no application or authority within the sphere of their political action; just so soon will that People hasten to an utter demoralization, and consequently to anarchy and ruin. It is, in fact, the doctrine of the French Revolution; and it only bore then its legitimate fruit, which it will always bear.

I believe that in this is to be found one, at least, of the causes of the disaster that now threatens the Nation as with a deluge of fire. It may undoubtedly be true, as is so often asserted, that what is called Political Preaching has contributed toward bringing the country to its present condition. But it is only true for the reason, that there may be a *wrong* sort of Political Preaching; a preaching, that is, which forgets the fact, that, in the great system of Doctrine, one Truth must balance and limit another, — and further, that it is the distinctive Law of the diffusion of Truth, that it spreads itself abroad as by the gradual and silent influence of the leaven, and not by agencies of violence and wrong; preaching moreover, which,

however honest in intention, may yet be injudicious in manner, and which, instead of always "speaking the truth in Love," tends only to arouse the evil and vindictive passions of the heart. And yet it may still be a question, whether, after all, it may not be likewise true, and true perhaps even in a higher degree, that the present troubles have also been, in part, occasioned by the entire absence from our Pulpits of the *right sort* of Political Preaching. It certainly can not be questioned by any careful observer, that the seeming acquiescence of the clergy in the doctrine, so continually and boldly asserted *without definition and without limitation*, that the Pulpit, in the common phrase, has "no *right* to meddle with Politics," has tended to create, and has created, the belief in the popular mind,—however illogical may be the deduction,—that the great principles of right and wrong, of truth and falsehood, are in no way binding upon men in their political conduct. Doubtless such an inference as this is very far indeed from being intended by those who have been most earnest in asserting this dogma. But then it must be remembered,—and here is the evil

and the danger, — that the great masses of Society are never, at best, very skilful in drawing distinctions; and that there are besides, in every community, a vast multitude who are only too eager to seize upon such a doctrine, so approved, as an opiate for conscience, and an argument and defence for them in the pursuit of their evil designs. Translate this doctrine into the Formulæ of popular practice, and you have — “The Law of God does not apply to Political questions,” “In my Political acts, I am under no obligation to consider that Law;” and then, by a further consequence, “Everything is fair in Politics,” and “There is no such thing as Political crime — crime, that is, that makes me amenable to God.” And it is upon these ideas, not only acted upon by the immense herd of unprincipled Politicians, but *practically endorsed and accepted* by the great majority of the people, that that fearful mass of corruption has grown up which now seems about to result in the complete overthrow of the Republic.

We do not hesitate to say then that the troubles and perils that to-day encompass us, are designed to present to us a timely warning in this matter.

They are the fruit of the corruption which has arisen from the causes we have mentioned. God has been thrust out from the government of the Nation. His Law has been treated with neglect, if not with contempt. The fact that "the Glory of God is the ultimate purpose of the State," has been entirely disregarded. And it is a retributive Justice that, at length, threatens to grind us to powder.

And now, my Brethren, having shown you the lessons which, as it seems to us, the present troubles are *calculated* to teach, we think that we have also shown you what they are *designed* to teach; and so have brought out what we have called their *Educational Powers*. It is certain that the country never could have gotten into its present condition, had not these causes of evil which we have considered been, for a long time, and busily at work. No one cause, we may be sure, has brought about the threatened dissolution of this great Confederacy. No more pressing necessity than has always existed, exists now for the dissolution of this Union. And, what is more, no such necessity would have been felt to exist by the wise and good in any section of the land, had they been left to themselves, and

permitted to follow out their own honest convictions. The fire that is consuming the fair Edifice founded by the wisdom and the unselfish Patriotism of the Fathers, has been kindled by political Demagogues for their own base purposes; and it has found, alas, an only too ready material in the political demoralization which has eaten out the Loyalty of the Nation. The causes of ruin lie far back of any immediate question. Immediate questions may be used as occasions or pretexts; but it holds true now, as always, that the decay of Nations begins in the hearts of the People. If political action had always been regarded, even by the better classes of the community, as a matter of serious thought — as a thing of Conscience and Duty; if the wonderful Prosperity wherewith God hath blessed us, had not so besotted us that we have almost forgotten that He is the alone Creator and Preserver of Nations; if our Liberty had not been used by us as “a cloak of maliciousness” — making us infidel, and insolent, and lawless; if by the recognition, and faithful discharge, of our duties as Citizens, the reign of Demagogues — the real curse of the Nation — had been rendered impossible, as it might have been, and “the best” had been en-

trusted, in all the land, with the government of the country; if the Law of God had always been recognized as possessing a binding authority upon our political conduct;—if these things had been so, the existence of the perils that now threaten us would have been simply impossible. No need would then have been felt for any one to rise up, and plead the cause of the Union; for no traitorous hand would have dared, if indeed such could even have been found, to lift itself, in rebellion, against it. The very first whisper of such a purpose, would have drawn forth a hurricane of indignant execration, from every quarter, which would have overwhelmed the catiff who had dared to breathe it. And woe be to him—come he from North, or South, or East, or West—who even now has voluntarily contributed, directly or indirectly,—by word, or pen, or deed,—to the dismemberment and consequent degradation of his country. His children's children shall rise up and call him, Accursed.

And now what remains to be done. Let us ponder these lessons which God is teaching us, and seek to derive from them wisdom for the Future. We are unwilling to believe that there

is no Future for this People. We cannot bring ourselves to believe that this great Government — to which so many tear-filled eyes have been turned, with fond hope, from the down-trodden millions of the Earth; the thought of which has been as a Pillar of Fire shining through the gloom of many a prison; within which are enshrined so many glorious Memories, around which cluster so many Hopes; — that this Government is even now at an end, and that already the finger of Judgment hath written upon its walls — “Ichabod, the glory is departed.” There may indeed be division for a time; but let us hope, — certainly let us pray, that God is only leading this People through these present trials, in order, by such salutary though painful discipline, to fit them for a yet larger usefulness, and a higher glory. But let us remember that this cannot be unless we so repent us of our sins and turn to Him, that He may indeed be our God, and we His People. He only can bless, and preserve us. His Will is the only safe Policy of Nations. His glory is the only true Ambition. And as it is only the Law of Gravitation that holds together, in glittering bands, those starry clusters that pour out their

splendors upon the evening sky, so it is only His Law, contained in that Sacred Volume, that can bind together, in happy and peaceful union, this Constellation of States, which we yet hope is to continue, after the clouds which now obscure it are blown aside, to be a Joy and a Glory in the Earth.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 012 026 455 2

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 012 026 455 2



Permalife[®]
pH 8.5